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Rewald's attorney has 1,400 questions for the CIA

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What does Ronald Rewald's "CIA connection," whatever it was, have to do with whether he is innocent of taking millions from investors under false pretenses?



Rewald

Rewald's attorney — in a new filing with the court — lays out for the first time the legal arguments to support his claim the CIA plays a key role in the case and his demand for CIA-related information from the government to conduct his defense.

Federal Public Defender Michael Levine filed with the court a request for answers from the government to about 1,400 questions regarding the CIA. The questions, because they may include classified material, were filed under seal with a court security officer.

To prove his innocence of charges of fraud, perjury and income tax evasion, Rewald "proposes to show that he was an agent for the CIA," as were many other employees and associates, Levine said, and that his company was a cover operation set up and operated by the CIA for covert activities.

Rewald will also show that some subsidiaries "were actually used exclusively by the CIA as cover operations, and that a substantial amount of the work done" by company employees "was devoted to CIA projects."

Rewald, a founder in 1978 of the firm of Bishop Baldwin Rewald Dillingham & Wong, lived

a dazzling lifestyle in Honolulu until July 1983 when he attempted suicide following a TV news story raising questions about his company.

Within days, the company collapsed. Bankruptcy officials have reported that Rewald — promising interest up to 50 percent — took in more than \$20 million from more than 400 investors. Bankruptcy reports say Rewald paid about half of it back as "interest" and repaid principal, spent about \$5 million on company operations and about \$5 million on himself, family and friends. Few investments were made and virtually all money lost, officials say.

The CIA has grudgingly acknowledged a "slight contact" with Rewald, who provided commercial cover for at least one agent, and filed some rambling reports on foreign travels and purported business deals — some including military weapons.

What does that have to do with Rewald's guilt or innocence?

Levine says Rewald will prove the truth of his assertions about CIA involvement as a defense to charges of perjury about the CIA.

More, the lawyer said, Rewald will show that even though there may have been a "scheme," it was a scheme to protect the CIA. It is, Levine said, like an undercover agent

selling drugs — not actually an illegal act, even though it may look like one.

Another defense, Levine said, is that Rewald — just like some defendants in the famed Watergate break-in case — was relying on what he believed was the CIA's authority to order him to carry out his mission. And Levine said Rewald may in the future claim that the government entrapped him into illegal acts.

Levine said Rewald needs information on persons linked to the CIA who helped maintain the company's connection with the agency; information on projects the company performed for the CIA; and information on any cover operations which were "in some way closely related to or subsidiaries of Bishop Baldwin."

Levine said "much of the evidence needed to establish and corroborate Rewald's innocence — if not already destroyed — is currently in the possession of the CIA."

Federal Judge Harold Fong will hear arguments March 4 concerning whether the CIA material is relevant to the Rewald case.